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The
Golden
flute

THE GOLDEN FLUTE

Chosen and Edited

by

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SAROJINI NAIDU
"The Nightingale of India".

DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF

SAROJINI NAIDU

Poetess, Patriot, Orator

(1879—1949)

“ For me, O my Master,
The rapture of Love ! ”

“ For me, O my Master,
The rapture of Truth ! ”

“ For me, O my Master,
The rapture of song ! ”.

(From Sarojini Devi's “ *Guerdon* ”)

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PREFACE

As the Biblical writer might have added long ago, "Of the making of Prefaces there is no end". But who reads a Preface nowadays ? The only reassuring thing about a Preface is that we can so easily turn our back to its face.

This anthology, intended for younger Indian teen-agers, should, it is expected and desired, be able to give them something of true poetic delight : a treasure of joy and solace, an unending source of Inspiration to face the challenge of life ; something which should refine and ennoble the readers' feelings and thoughts, and lead them on to fine conduct and to right thought. It should bring them nearer to the sad heart of common breathing humanity, and make them at the same time more aware of the rejoicing that the Moon brings in one's life, the self-forgetting rapture of the magic flute of Krishna, the delight of the rains, the poignant ecstasy of the Koel's song. It should make them better men and women, better citizens of our beloved Motherland.

The anthologist's hard road must avoid the Scylla of too much that is Old, and also the Charybdis of too much is New. The pleasure of recognition (of old familiar pieces) must be balanced by that of discovery (of comparatively less-known poems). "There is nothing new under the sun," says the Bible, with a deep wisdom ; and yet, is not the moon new every month, are we not new-born every morning, is the rainbow of Today the same that we

saw in our far-off boyhood? The ever-changing, ever-changeless Face of Life is never the same, yet ever the same: "the more the change, the more the same", as the French proverb puts it.

How hard it is for the would-be flower-gatherer to exclude, to reject! and yet he must rigorously shut the seeing eye and turn the blind eye towards much that is finest gold. One poem is too long; another too hard for young minds; the subject-matter of a third (*e.g.*, Snow, the Sea, the Skylark, the Ship) too far removed from experience of the average Indian school-boy, a fourth far too hackneyed, like an old worn-out coin issued from the mint long, long ago: sometimes Copyright difficulties come between our young pupil and what we should like to give him. The length, the diction, the mood, the subject-matter, of the poem, all must be rigorously examined, and even when all these tests have been triumphantly passed, there remains the difficulty that Song is plenty, but Time is none. Fairyland is unlimited, but our short child-legs get soon fatigued of wandering in Lands of Delight.

Particular care has been taken to keep out poems on "Ships", "the Sea", "Westminster Bridge", etc., which are too far out of the range of experience of the average North Indian School-goer for his or her imagination to seize upon fruitfully.

For more reasons than one, the editor devoutly believes in the superiority of the short poem, as such, to the long one, as such, particularly where young children are to be the readers. Still, an endeavour has been made, keeping in mind the demands of what may be called "examinability", to include a proportion of longer poems like

“Horatius”, “The Leap of Roushan Beg”, “The Plate of Gold”, “Try Again”, “The Best School of All”, “Casabianca”, “Summer”, etc. This will give both the examiners and the examinees, it is hoped, something to get their teeth in, some stuff to bite upon! Notes and Questions on the Poems will be found in the appropriate places. A number of poems and passages included herein seem to offer material suitable to be committed to memory, *e. g.*, “*Horatius*”, ll. 49—59; “*Laugh and Be Merry*”, ll. 11 — 16; “*Speak gently*”; the whole of the first and the last stanzas of “*The Best School of All*” (Newbolt), “*Motherland*”, and “*A Nation’s Strength*”. The young ones must be encouraged thus to make such selected passages their very own, independent of the printed page, and a possession for all time.

“Go, Little Book, and be sped”. Bring sunshine and happiness into the lives, fresh and unfolding, of the tender human blossoms of Resurgent India, and thus gladden the heart of thy loving compiler too.

March, 1950.

—*The Editor.*

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51—80

I. THE PAPER BOAT

I remember a day in my childhood when
I floated a paper boat on the stream.

It was a wet day of July ; I was alone and happy over
my play.

I floated my paper boat on the stream. 5

Suddenly the storm-clouds thickened : the wind
came in gusts, and rain poured in torrents.

Rills of muddy water rushed and swelled the stream
and sank my boat. 9

Bitterly I thought that the storm had come on purpose
to spoil my happiness ; all its anger was against
me.

All this long cloudy day of July I have been musing
over those games in life in which I was the
loser. 15

Just now I am blaming my fate for the many tricks it
has played on me, when suddenly I remem-
bered the paper boat that sank in the stream.

Rabindranath Tagore

2. YOUNG AND OLD

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green,
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen,
Then hey for boot and horse, lad, 5
And round the world away,
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown ; 10
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down,
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among :
God grant you find one face there, 15
You loved when all was young.

Charles Kingsley

3. THE SCHOOLBOY

I love to rise in a summer morn
 When the birds sing on every tree ;
 The distant huntsman winds his horn,
 And the skylark sings with me.
 O ! what sweet company.

But to go to school in a summer morn,
 O ! it drives all joy away ;
 Under a cruel eye outworn,
 The little ones spend the day
 In sighing and dismay. 10

Ah ! then at times I drooping sit,
 And spend many an anxious hour,
 Nor in my book can I take delight,
 Nor sit in learning's bower,
 Worn thro' with the dreary shower.

How can the bird that is born for joy
 Sit in a cage and sing ?
 How can a child, when fears annoy,
 But droop his tender wing,
 And forget his youthful spring ? 20

O ! father and mother, if buds are nipp'd
 And blossoms blown away,
 And if the tender plants are stripp'd
 Of their joy in the springing day,
 By sorrow and care's dismay,

How shall the summer arise in joy,
 Or the summer fruits appear ?
 Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,
 Or bless the mellowing year,
 When the blasts of winter appear ? 30

William Blake

4. I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

I REMEMBER, I remember
 The house where I was born,
 The little window where the sun
 Came peeping in at morn ;
 He never came a wink too soon,
 Nor brought too long a day ;
 But now, I often wish the night
 Had borne my breath away !

I remember, I remember
 The roses, red and white, 10
 The violets, and the lily-cups,
 Those flowers made of light !
 The lilacs where the robin built,
 And where my brother set
 The laburnum on his birthday,— 15
 The tree is living yet !

I remember, I remember
 Where I used to swing,
 And thought the air must rush as fresh
 To swallows on the wing ; 20
 My spirit flew in feathers then,
 That is so heavy now,
 And summer pools could hardly cool
 The fever on my brow !

I remember, I remember 25
 The fir trees dark and high ;
 I used to think their slender tops
 Were close against the sky :
 It was a childish ignorance,
 But now 'tis little joy 30
 To know I'm farther off from Heaven
 Than when I was a boy.

Thomas Hood

5. CASABIANCA

The boy stood on the burning deck,
 Whence all but him had fled ;
 The flame, that lit the battle's wreck,
 Shone round him—o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
 As born to rule the storm ;
 A creature of heroic blood ;
 A proud though childlike form !

8

The flames rolled on—he would not go,
 Without his father's word ;—
 That father, faint in death below,
 His voice no longer heard.

He called aloud : “ Say, father ! say
 If yet my task be done ? ”—
 He knew not that the chieftain lay
 Unconscious of his son.

16

“ Speak, father ! ” once again he cried,
 “ If I may yet be gone !
 “ And ”—but the booming shots replied,
 And fast the flames rolled on.

Upon his brow he felt their breath,
 And in his waving hair,
 And looked from that lone post of death,
 In still, yet brave despair.

24

And shouted but once more aloud,
 " My father ! must I stay ? "
 While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
 The wreathing fires made way :

They wrapped the ship in splendour wild,
 They caught the flag on high,
 And streamed above the gallant child,
 Like banners in the sky.

32

There came a burst of thunder sound,
 The boy !—oh, where was he ?
 Ask of the winds, that far around
 With fragments strewed the sea,—

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
 That well had borne their part !
 But the noblest thing that perished there,
 Was that young faithful heart !

40

Mrs. F. L. Hemans

6. THE CHILD'S FIRST GRIEF

' Oh, call my brother back to me !

I cannot play alone ;

The summer comes with flowers and bee—

Where is my brother gone ?

' The butterfly is glancing bright

Across the sunbeam's track ;

I care not now to chase its flight—

Oh, call my brother back !

5

' The flowers run wild—the flowers we sowed

Around our garden tree ;

Our vine is drooping with its load—

Oh, call him back to me ! '

10

' He would not hear thy voice, fair child !

He may not come to thee ;

The face that once like spring-time smiled

On earth no more thou'lt see.

15

' A rose's brief bright life of joy,

Such unto him was given ;

Go—thou must play alone, my boy—

Thy brother is in heaven'.

20

‘ And has he left the birds and flowers ;
 And must I call in vain ?
 And through the long, long summer hours,
 Will he not come again ?

‘ And by the brook, and in the glade, 25
 Are all our wanderings o’er ?
 O, while my brother with me played,
 Would I had loved him more ! ’

Mrs. F. L. Hemans

7. THE BEST SCHOOL OF ALL

It’s good to see the School we knew,
 The land of youth and dream,
 To greet again the rule we knew,
 Before we took the stream ;
 Though long we’ve missed the sight of her,
 Our hearts may not forget :
 We’ve lost the old delight of her,
 We keep her honour yet.

We'll honour yet the School we knew.

The best School of all ;

We'll honour yet the rule we knew,

Till the last bell call—

For, working days and holidays,

And glad or melancholy days,

They were great days and jolly days,

At the best School of all.

16

The stars and sounding vanities

That half the crowd bewitch,

What are they but inanities

To him that treads the pitch ?

And where's the wealth, I'm wondering,

Could buy the cheers that roll

When the last charge goes thundering

Beneath the twilight goal ?

24

The men that tanned the hide of us,

Our daily foes and friends,

They shall not lose their pride of us,

Howe'er the journey ends.

Their voice, to us who sing of it,

No more its message bears,

But the round world shall ring of it

And all we are be theirs.

32

To speak of Fame a venture is,

There's little here can bide,

But we may face the centuries,
 And dare the deepening tide ;
 For though the dust that's part of us
 To dust again be gone,
 Yet here shall beat the heart of us—
 The School we handed on.

40

We'll honour yet the School we knew,
 The best School of all ;
 We'll honour yet the rule we knew,
 Till the last bell call.
 For, working days and holidays,
 And glad or melancholy days,
 They were great days and jolly days
 At the best School of all.

48

Sir Henry Newbolt

8. JOY AND PLEASURE

Now, Joy is born of parents poor,
 And Pleasure of our richer kind ;
 Though Pleasure's free, she cannot sing
 As sweet a song as Joy confined.

Pleasure's a Moth, that sleeps by day
 And dances by false glare at night ;
 But Joy's a Butterfly, that loves
 To spend its wings in Nature's light.

8

Joy's like a Bee that gently sucks
 Away on blossoms his sweet hour ;
 But Pleasure's like a greedy Wasp,
 That plums and cherries would devour.

Joy's like a Lark that lives alone,
 Whose ties are very strong, though few ;
 But Pleasure like a Cuckoo roams,
 Makes much acquaintance, no friends true.

16

Joy from her heart doth sing at home,
 With little care if others hear ;
 But Pleasure then is cold and dumb,
 And sings and laughs with strangers near.

W. H. Davies

THE FLUTE-PLAYER OF BRINDABAN

Why didst thou play thy matchless flute

Neath the Kadamba tree,

And wound my idly dreaming heart

With poignant melody,

So where thou goest I must go,

5

My flute-player, with thee ?

Still must I like a homeless bird

Wander, forsaking all ;

The earthly loves and worldly lures

That held my life in thrall,

10

And follow, follow, answering

Thy magical flute-call.

To Indra's golden-flowering groves

Where streams immortal flow,

Or to sad Yama's silent Courts

15

Engulfed in lampless woe,

Where'er thy subtle flute I hear,

Beloved, I must go !

No peril of the deep or height

Shall daunt my winged foot ;

20

No fear of time-unconquered space,

Or light-untravelled route,

Impede my heart that pants to drain

The nectar of thy flute !

Sarojini Naidu

10. PEACE

Sweet Peace, where dost thou dwell? I humbly
crave,

Let me once know.

I sought thee in a secret cave,

And ask'd, if Peace were there,
A hollow wind did seem to answer, 'No,
Go, seek elsewhere.'

5

I did ; and going, did a rainbow note :

Surely, thought I,

This is the lace of Peace's coat :

I will search out the matter.

10

But while I looked, the clouds immediately

Did break and scatter.

Then went I to a garden and did spy

A gallant flower,

The Crown Imperial : Sure, said I,

15

Peace at the root must dwell.

But when I dugg'd, I saw a worm devour

What show'd so well.

George Herbert

II. THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AT CORUNNA

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried ;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night, 5
The sods with our bayonets turning ;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin inclosed his breast,
Not in sheet nor in shroud we wound him ; 10
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow ;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead, 15
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollow'd his narrow bed
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow ! 20

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone
 And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
 But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
 In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done 25
 When the clock struck the hour for retiring ;
 And we heard the distant and random gun
 That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
 From the field of his fame fresh and gory ; 30
 We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone—
 But we left him alone with his glory.

C. Wolfe

12. LAUGH AND BE MERRY

Laugh and be merry, remember, better the world
 with a song.
 Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a wrong.
 Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length of a
 span.

Laugh and be proud to belong to the old proud
pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry ; remember, in olden time, 5
God made Heaven and Earth for joy He took in a
rhyme.

Made them, and filled them full with the strong red
wine of His mirth,

The splendid joy of the stars, the joy of the earth.
So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue
cup of the sky.

Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping by. 10
Laugh and battle, and work, and drink of the wine
outpoured,

In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of the Lord.
Laugh, and be merry together, like brothers akin,
Guesting awhile in the the rooms of a beautiful inn,
Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music
ends. 15

Laugh till the game is played ; and be you merry, my
friends.

John Masefield

13. HAPPINESS.

Just to be tender, just to be true ;
 Just to be glad the whole day through ;
 Just to be merciful, just to be mild ;
 Just to be trustful as a child ;

Just to be gentle and kind and sweet ;
 Just to be helpful with willing feet ;
 Just to be cheery when things go wrong ;
 Just to drive sadness away with a song ;
 Whether the hour is dark or bright,
 Just to be loyal to God and right !

10

Anonymous

14. FAREWELL

Farewell, O eager faces that surround me,
 Claiming the tender service of my days.
 Farewell, O joyous spirits that have bound me
 With the love-sprinkled garlands of your praise !

O golden lamps of hope ! how shall I bring you
 Life's kindling flame from a forsaken fire ?
 O glowing hearts of youth, how shall I sing you
 Life's glorious message from a broken lyre ?

(from "The Times of India Annual", 1950)

Sarojini Naidu

15. BREATHES THERE THE MAN

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
 Who never to himself hath said,
 'This is my own, my native land !'
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd
 As home his footsteps he hath turn'd 5
 From wandering on a foreign strand ?
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well :
 For him no Minstrel raptures swell,
 High though his titles, proud his name, 10
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim ;
 Despite these titles, power, and pelf,
 The wretch, concentr'd all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And, doubly dying, shall go down 15
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
 Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

Sir Walter Scott

16. FREEDOM

Men ! whose boast it is that ye
 Come of fathers brave and free,
 If there breathe on earth a slave,
 Are ye truly free and brave ?
 If ye do not feel the chain,
 When it works a brother's pain,
 Are ye not base slaves indeed,
 Slaves unworthy to be freed ?

Women ! who shall one day bear
 Sons to breathe New England air,
 If ye hear, without a blush,
 Deeds to make the roused blood rush
 Like red lava through your veins,
 For your sisters now in chains,—
 Answer ! are ye fit to be
 Mothers of the brave and free ?

Is true Freedom but to break
 Fetters for our own dear sake,
 And, with leathern hearts, forget
 That we owe mankind a debt ?

No ! true freedom is to share
 All the chains our brothers wear,

And, with heart and hand, to be
Earnest to make others free !

They are slaves who fear to speak 25
For the fallen and the weak ;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink,
From the truth they needs must think ; 30
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

J. R. Lowell

17. HORATIUS

But the consul's brow was sad,
And the consul's speech was low ;
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe ;
“ Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down ;
And if they once may win the bridge,
What hope to save the town ? ” 8

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The captain of the gate :

“ To every man upon this earth,
Death cometh soon or late ;
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his gods ?

16

“ Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may ;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play :
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now, who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me ? ”

24

Then out spake Spurius Lartius ;
A Ramnian proud was he ;
“ Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee.”
And out spake strong Herminius ;
Of Titian blood was he ;
“ I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee.”

32

"Horatius," quoth the consul,
 "As thou sayest, so let it be."
 And straight against that great array
 Forth went the dauntless three,
 For Romans in Rome's quarrel
 Spared neither land nor gold,
 Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
 In the brave days of old.

40

Now while the Three were tightening
 Their harness on their backs,
 The consul was the foremost man
 To take in hand an axe ;
 And Fathers mixed with Commons,
 Seized hatchet, bar and crow,
 And smote upon the planks above
 And loosed the props below.

48

Meanwhile, the Tuscan army,
 Right glorious to behold,
 Came flashing back the noonday light,
 Rank behind rank, like surges bright
 Of a broad sea of gold.
 Four hundred trumpets sounded
 A peal of warlike glee,
 As that great host, with measured tread,
 And spears advanced and ensigns spread,

55

Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

59

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter,
From all the vanguard rose ;
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array :
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew ;
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way.

68

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus,
Into the stream beneath ;
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth ;
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust,
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

76

But now no sound of laughter
Was heard amongst the foes :
A wild and wrathful clamour
From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' length from the entrance
Halted that deep array,

80

And for a space no man came forth
To win the narrow way.

84

But hark ! the cry is “ Astur ” ;
And lo ! the ranks divide ;
And the great Lord of Luna
Comes with his stately stride,
Upon his ample shoulders
Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
Which none but he can wield.

92

He smiled on those bold Romans,
A smile serene and high ;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
And scorn was in his eye,
Quoth he, “ The she-wolf’s litter
Stand savagely at bay ;
But will ye dare to follow,
If Astur clears the way ? ”

100

Then whirling up his broad sword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow.

105

The blow though turned, came yet too nigh ;
 It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh ;
 The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
 To see the red blood flow.

110

He reeled, and on Herminius
 He leaned one breathing-space ;
 Then, like a wild cat mad with wounds,
 Sprang right at Astur's face,
 Through teeth, and skull, and helmet,
 So fierce a thrust he sped,
 The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
 Behind the Tuscan's head.

118

Macaulay

18. "MOTHERLAND"

Blessed am I that I am born to this land
 and that I had the luck to love her.

What care I if queenly treasure is not in
 her store but precious enough is for
 me the living wealth of her love.

The best gift of fragrance to my heart is
 from her own flowers and I know
 not where else shines the moon that
 can flood my being with such love-
 liness.

10

The first light revealed to my eyes was from
 her own sky and let the same light
 kiss them before they are closed
 for ever.

14

Rabindranath Tagore

19. THE TIGER

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?

In what distant deeps or skies
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes ?
 On what wings dare he aspire ?
 What the hand dare seize the fire ?

8

And what shoulder, and what art,
 Could twist the sinews of thy heart ?
 And when thy heart began to beat,
 What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer, what the chain?
 In what furnace was thy brain ?
 What the anvil ? What dread grasp
 Dare its deadly terrors clasp ?

16

When the stars threw down their spears,
 And watered heaven with their tears,
 Did He smile his work to see ?
 Did He who made the lamb make thee ?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Dare frame thy fearful symmetry ?

24

William Blake

20. A GREEN CORNFIELD

The earth was green, the sky was blue :

I saw and heard one sunny morn,
A skylark hung between the two,
A singing speck above the corn ;

A stage below, in gay accord,

5

White butterflies danced on the wing,
And still the singing skylark soared
And silent sank and soared to sing

The cornfield stretched a tender green

To right and left beside my walks ;

10

I knew he had a nest unseen

Somewhere among the million stalks :

And as I paused to hear his song,

While swift the sunny moments slid,

Perhaps his mate sat listening long,

15

And listened longer than I did.

Christina Rossetti

21. SUMMER

Pitiless heat from heaven pours
 By day, but nights are cool ;
 Continual bathing gently lowers
 The water in the pool ;
 The evening brings a charming peace ;
 For summer-time is here
 When love that never knows surcease
 Is less imperious, dear.

Yet love can never fall asleep ;
 For he is waked today 10
 By songs that all their sweetness keep
 And lutes that softly play,
 By fans with sandal-water wet
 That bring us drowsy rest,
 By strings of pearls that gently fret 15
 Full many a lovely breast.

The sunbeams like the fires are hot
 That on the altar wake ;
 The enmity is quite forgot
 Of peacock and of snake ; 20
 The peacock spares his ancient foe,
 For pluck and hunger fail ;
 He hides his burning head below
 The shadow of his tail.

Beneath the garland of the rays 25
 That leave no corner cool,
 The water vanishes in haze
 And leaves a muddy pool ;
 The cobra does not hunt for food
 Nor heed the frog at all 30
 Who finds beneath the serpent's hood
 A sheltering parasol.

Dear maiden of the graceful song,
 To you may summer's power
 Bring moonbeams clear and garlands long 35
 And breath of trumpet-flower,
 Bring lakes that countless lilies dot,
 Refreshing water-sprays,
 Sweet friends at evening, and a spot
 Cool after burning days. 40

Kalidasa, (translated by Arthur W. Ryder)

22. THE RAINS

The rain advances like a king
 In awful majesty ;
 Hear, dearest, how his thunders ring
 Like royal drums, and see
 His lightning-banners wave ; a cloud 5
 For elephant he rides,
 And finds his welcome from the crowd
 Of lovers and of brides.

The clouds, a mighty army, march
 With drumlike thundering 10
 And stretch upon the rainbow's arch
 The lightning's flashing string ;
 The cruel arrows of the rain
 Smite them who live, apart
 From whom they love, with stinging pain, 15
 And pierce them to the heart.

The forest seems to show its glee
 In flowering *nipa* plants ;
 In waving twigs of many a tree
 Wind-swept, it seems to dance ; 20
 Its *ketak*-blossom's opening sheath
 Is like a smile put on
 To greet the rain's reviving breath,
 Now pain and heat are gone.

To you, dear, may the cloudy time 25
 Bring all that you desire,
 Bring every pleasure, perfect prime,
 To set a bride on fire.
 May rain whereby life wakes and shines
 Where there is power of life,
 The unchanging friend of clinging vines, 30
 Shower blessings on my wife !

Kalidasa, (translated by Arthur W. Ryder)

23. HOW BEAUTIFUL IS THE RAIN

How beautiful is the rain !
 After the dust and heat,
 In the broad and fiery street,
 In the narrow lane,
 How beautiful is the rain ! 5
 How it clatters along the roofs,
 Like the tramp of hoofs,
 How it gushes and struggles out
 From the throat of the overflowing spout !

Across the window-pane
 It pours and pours ;
 And swift and wide,
 With a muddy tide,
 Like a river down the gutter roars
 The rain, the welcome rain !

10

15

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

24. TO DAFFODILS

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon ;
 As yet the early-rising sun
 Has not attain'd his noon.

Stay, stay,
 Until the hasting day
 Has run

But to the evensong ;
 And having pray'd together, we
 Will go with you along.

5

15

We have short time to stay, as you,
 We have as short a spring ;
 As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you, or anything.

We die,
 As your hours do, and dry
 Away
 Like to the summer's rain ;
 Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
 Ne'er to be found again. 20

Robert Herrick

25. THE LEAP OF ROUSHAN BEG

mounted on Kyrat strong and fleet,
 his chestnut steed with four white feet,
 Roushan Beg, called Kurroglou,
 son of the road and bandit chief,
 seeking refuge and relief,
 Up the mountain pathway flew.

Such was Kyrat's wondrous speed,
 never yet could any steed
 Reach the dust-cloud in his course.
 More than maiden, more than wife,
 More than gold, and next to life,
 Roushan the Robber loved his horse. 10

In the land that lies beyond
 Erzeroum and Trebizond,
 Garden-girt his fortress stood ;
 Plundered *khan*, or caravan
 Journeying north from Koordistan,
 Gave him wealth and wine and food.

Seven hundred and fourscore
 Men at arms his livery wore,
 Did his bidding night and day.
 Now, through regions all unknown,
 He was wandering, lost, alone,
 Seeking without guide his way.

20

Suddenly the pathway ends,
 Sheer the precipice descends,
 Loud the torrent roars unseen ;
 Thirty feet from side to side
 Yawns the chasm ; on air must ride
 He who crosses this ravine.

30

Following close in his pursuit,
 At the precipice's foot,
 Reyhan the Arab of Orfah
 Halted with his hundred men,
 Shouting upward from the glen,
 ‘ *La Illah illa Allah !* ’

Gently Roushan Beg caressed
 Kyrat's forehead, neck, and breast ;
 Kissed him upon both his eyes ;
 Sang to him in his wild way,
 As upon the topmost spray,
 Sings a bird before it flies.

40

' O my Kyrat, O my steed,
 Round and slender as a reed,
 Carry me this peril through !
 Sàtin housing shall be thine,
 Shoes of gold, O Kyrat mine,
 O thou soul of Kurroglou !

' Soft thy skin as silken skein ;
 Soft as woman's hair thy mane ;
 Tender are thine eyes and true ;
 All thy hoofs like ivory shine,
 Polished bright ; O life of mine,
 Leap, and rescue Kurroglou !'

50

Kyrat, then, the strong and fleet,
 Drew together his four white feet,
 Paused a moment on the verge,
 Measured with his eye the space,
 And into the air's embrace
 Leaped as leaps the ocean surge.

60

As the ocean surge o'er sand
 Bears a swimmer safe to land,
 Kyrat safe his rider bore;
 Rattling down the deep abyss
 Fragments of the precipice
 Rolled like pebbles on a shore.

Roushan's tasselled cap of red
 Trembled not upon his head;
 Careless sat he and upright,
 Neither hand nor bridle shook
 Nor his head he turned to look,
 As he galloped out of sight.

Flash of harness in the air,
 Seen a moment like the glare
 Of a sword drawn from its sheath—
 Thus the phantom horseman passed,
 And the shadow that he cast
 Leaped the cataract underneath.

Reyhan the Arab held his breath
 While this vision of life and death
 Passed above him. 'Allahu!'
 Cried he, 'In all Koordistan
 Lives there not so brave a man
 As this Robber Kurroglou.'

70

80

H. W. Longfellow

26. THE PERFECT LIFE

It is not growing like a tree
 In bulk, doth make man better be ;
 Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
 To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere ;

A lily of a day
 Is fairer in May,
 Although it fall and die that night—
 It was the plant and flower of Light.

In small proportions we just beauties see ;
 And in short measures life may perfect be. 10

Ben Jonson

27. THE PLATE OF GOLD

One day there fell in great Benares' temple-court
 A wondrous plate of gold, whereon these words were
 writ

‘ To him who loveth best, a gift from Heaven.’

Thereat
 The priests made proclamation : ‘ At the midday
 hour,

Each day, let those assemble who for virtue deem

Their right to heaven's gift the best ; and we will hear
The deeds of mercy done, and so adjudge '.

The news

Ran swift as light, and soon from every quarter
came 10

Nobles and *munshis*, hermits, scholars, holy men,
And all renowned for gracious or for splendid deeds.
Meanwhile the priests in solemn council sat and
heard

What each had done to merit best the gift of
Heaven.

So for a year the claimants came and went. 15

At last,

After a patient weighing of the worth of all,
The priests beetowed the plate of gold on one who
seemed

The largest lover of the race—whose whole estate,
Within the year, had parted been among the poor. 20

This man, all trembling with his joy, advanced to
take

The golden plate—when lo ! at his first finger touch
It changed to basest lead ! All stood aghast ; but
when

The hapless claimant dropt it clanging on the
floor,

Heaven's guerdon was again transformed to
shining gold.

So for another twelve month sat the priests and
judged. 26

Thrice they awarded—thrice did Heaven refuse
the gift.

Meanwhile a host of poor, maimed beggars in the
street

Lay all about the temple gate, in hope to move
That love whereby each claimant hoped to win the
gift. 30

And well for them it was (if gold be charity,
For every pilgrim to the temple gate praised God
That love might thus approve itself before the test.
And so the coins rained freely in the outstretched
hands ;

But none of those who gave, so much as turned to
look 35

Into the poor sad eyes of them that begged.

And now

The second year had almost passed, but still the
plate

Of gold, by whomsoever touched, was turned to
lead.

At length there came a simple peasant—not
aware 40

Of that strange contest for the gift of God—to pay
 A vow within the temple. As he passed along
 The line of shrivelled beggars, all his soul was
 moved

Within him to sweet pity, and the tears welled up
 And trembled in his eyes.

45

Now by the temple gate
 There lay a poor, sore creature, blind, and shunned
 by all ;

But when the peasant came, and saw the sightless
 face

And trembling, maimed hands, he could not pass,
 but knelt,

And took both palms in his, and softly said : ‘ O
 thou,

My brother ! bear thy trouble bravely. God is
 good.’

50

Then he arose and walked straightway across the
 court,

And entered where they wrangled of their deeds
 of love

Before the priests.

A while he listened sadly ; then 55
 Had turned away ; but something moved the
 priest who held

The plate of gold to beckon to the peasant. . . So . . .
 He came, not understanding, and obeyed, and
 stretched

His hand and took the sacred vessel. Lo ! it shone
 With thrice its former lustre, and amazed them
 all !

60

‘ Son,’ cried the priest, ‘ rejoice. The gift of God
 is thine.

Thou lovest best ! ’ And all made answer, ‘ It is
 well,’

And, one by one, departed. But the peasant knelt
 And prayed, bowing his head above the golden plate ;
 While o’er his soul like morning streamed the love
 of God.

Leigh Hunt

28. THERE’S A GOOD TIME COMING

There’s a good time coming, boys,
 A good time coming,
 We may not live to see the day,
 But earth shall glisten in the ray
 Of the good time coming.

Cannon-balls may aid the truth,
 But thought's a weapon stronger ;
 We'll win our battle by its aid—
 Wait a little longer.

9

There's a good time coming, boys,
 A good time coming ;
 The pen shall supersede the sword,
 And right, not might, shall be the lord
 In the good time coming.
 Worth, not birth, shall rule mankind,
 And be acknowledged stronger,
 The proper impulse has been given—
 Wait a little longer.

18

There's a good time coming, boys,
 A good time coming ;
 War in all men's eyes shall be
 A monster of iniquity,
 In the good time coming.
 Nations shall not quarrel then,
 To prove which is the stronger,
 Nor slaughter men for glory's sake—
 Wait a little longer.

27

There's a good time coming, boys,
 A good time coming ;

Let us aid it all we can,
 Every woman, every man,
 The good time coming.
 Smallest helps, if rightly given,
 Make the impulse stronger,
 'Twill be strong enough one day—
 Wait a little longer.

36

Charles Mackay

29. TRY AGAIN

King Bruce of Scotland flung himself down
 In a lonely mood to think ;
 'Tis true he was monarch and wore a crown,
 But his heart was beginning to sink.

4

For he had been trying to do a great deed,
 To make his people glad ;
 He had tried and tried, but couldn't succeed,
 And so he became quite sad.

8

He flung himself down in low despair,
 As grieved as man could be,
 And after a while, as he pondered there,
 "I'll give it all up," said he.

12

Now just at the moment a spider dropped,
 With its silken cobweb clue,
 And the king in the midst of his thinking stopped
 To see what the spider would do. 16

'Twas a long way up to the ceiling dome,
 And it hung by a rope so fine,
 That how it would get to its cobweb home
 King Bruce could not divine. 20

It soon began to cling and crawl
 Straight up with strong endeavour ;
 But down it came with a slippery sprawl,
 As near to the ground as ever. 24

Up, up it ran, not a second could stay,
 To utter the least complaint,
 Till it fell still lower, and there it lay,
 A little dizzy and faint. 28

Its head grew steady—again it went,
 And travelled a half-yard higher ;
 'Twas a delicate thread it had to tread,
 And a road where its feet would tire. 32

Again it fell and swung below,
 But again it quickly mounted,
 Till up and down, now fast, now slow,
 Nine brave attempts were counted. 36

“Sure,” cried the king, “that foolish thing
 Will strive no more to climb,
 When it toils so hard to reach and cling,
 And tumbles every time.”

40

But up the insect went once more—
 Ah me ! 'tis an anxious minute.
 He's only a foot from his cobweb door ;
 Oh, say, will he lose or win it ?

44

Steadily, steadily, inch by inch,
 Higher and higher he got,
 And a bold little run at the very last pinch
 Put him into his native cot.

48

“Bravo ! bravo !” the King cried out,
 “All honour to those who try !
 The spider up there defied despair ;
 He conquered, and why should not I ?”

52

And Bruce of Scotland braced his mind,
 And gossips tell the tale,
 That he tried once more as he tried before,
 And that time did not fail.

56

Eliza Cook

30. NOW

Rise ! for the day is passing
And you lie dreaming on ;
The others have buckled their armour,
And forth to the fight are gone :

A place in the ranks awaits you,
Each man has some part to play ;
The Past and the Future are nothing,
In the face of the stern To-day.

8

Rise from your dreams of the Future—
Of gaining some hard-fought field ;
Of storming some airy fortress,
Or bidding some giant yield :

Your future has deeds of glory,
Of honour (God grant it may !)
But your arm will never be stronger,
Or the need so great as To-day.

16

Rise ! if the Past detains you,
Her sunshine and storms forget ;
No chains so unworthy to hold you
As those of a vain regret :

Sad or bright, she is lifeless ever,
 Cast her phantom arms away,
 Nor look back, save to learn the lesson
 Of a nobler strife To-day.

24

Rise ! for the day is passing :
 The sound that you scarcely hear
 Is the enemy marching to battle
 Arise ! for the foe is here !

Stay not to sharpen your weapons,
 Or the hour will strike at last.
 When, from dreams of a coming battle,
 You may wake to find it past !

32

A. A. Procter

31. A NATION'S STRENGTH

What makes a nation's pillars high
 And its foundations strong ?
 What makes it mighty to defy
 The foes that round it throng ?

It is not gold. Its kingdoms grand
 Go down in battle shock,
 Its shafts are laid on sinking sand,
 Not on abiding rock.

Is it the sword ? Ask the red dust
 Of empires passed away ;
 The blood has turned their stones to rust,
 Their glory to decay.

And is it pride ? Ah, that bright crown
 Has seemed to nations sweet ;
 But God has struck the lustre down
 In ashes at His feet.

Not gold, but only men, can make
 A people great and strong ;
 Men who for truth and honour's sake
 Stand fast and suffer long.

Brave men who work while others sleep,
 Who dare while others fly—
 They build a Nation's pillars deep
 And lift them to the sky.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

NOTES

1. THE PAPER BOAT

Sir Rabindranath Tagore, (1861—1941), needs no introduction, even to children, in India. His poetry is all beautiful and noble, marked by a deep religious feeling, a strong sense of nature, and love of childhood (especially in his “*The Crescent Moon*”). His “*Gitanjali*” won the famous Nobel prize and put modern India on the map of World Literature.

6. *thickened* : grew heavier and denser.

7. *gusts* : Violent, sudden blasts, or squalls, of wind.

8. *Rills* : streamlets.

swelled : flooded ; raised the level very high.

11. *musings* : thinking gently and sadly for long.

17. *when suddenly I remembered* : then I understand that the sorrows of my life might have been purely accidental, and not due to the malice of fate, (as was the case with the sinking of the Paper Boat of my childhood).

Questions.

1. What Lesson does the poem teach you ?

Answer : That they are wrong who, in their grief, blame God for supposed special injustice or cruelty to them.

2. YOUNG AND OLD

Charles Kingsley (1819—75) was also a priest, a Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, and a vigorous social reformer. His large and varied literary activities included things like the famous “*The Heroes*” (1856), in which he tells children in simple, attractive language many of the old Greek legends and myths (stories about the gods and super-men). He also wrote many pleasant songs and ballads ; children’s books like “*The Water Babies*” (1864), and adventure novels like “*Westward Ho !*” (1855) and “*Hereward the Wake*” (1865).

A very likeable writer with a manly, courageous gospel (message) and an admiration for heroism, nobility and vigour !

3. *goose and swan* : geese and swans are birds related to each other, but though they are somewhat similar, a swan has by far the more beautiful and dignified shape and appearance.

lass : young girl.

3-4. In youth, the power to distinguish a poor thing from a fine one is not developed, and, because of inexperience of the world, everything appears to be attractive and pleasing.

5. *hey for* : hurrah for : bring these things and thus be a brave world rider.

7. *young blood must have its course* : young people generally do what they like, without caring for the advice of their elders. Thus it is difficult to check or prevent them from making mistakes.

8. *every dog his day* : referring to the proverb—"Every dog has his day," meaning that even the weakest and poorest creature is powerful, or happy, at least for a short time once in his life.

11. *stale* : old and so dull and uninteresting.

wheels run down : when the machinery (of the human mind and body) has nearly stopped working.

14. among the exhausted and physically broken men and women.

15-16. Many of your old friends and companions must be dead by then. May God so arrange (I pray to God) that at least one such dear one has survived to be some company for you—not that all your dear ones have passed away, and you are left, in your old age, quite alone !

3. THE SCHOOLBOY

William Blake (1757—1827) is well known for his "*Songs of Innocence*" (1789), and "*Songs of Experience*" (1794). He was great as an artist (engraver of illustrations) also. He has a rare and often a childlike quality about him. "*Tiger! Tiger! burning bright*" is perhaps his most famous poem, often included in poetical selections for children.

4. I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

Thomas Hood (1799—1845).—In addition to his well-known humorous poems, he wrote a number of well-known serious poems (exciting our pity)—*e.g.*, the popular “Song of the Shirt,” “The Bridge of Sighs,” and “The Death-bed.”

had borne my breath away : had carried me away, dead.

lilacs : a sweet-smelling shrub with faintly pink, purple colour.

robin : a well-known song-bird.

built : its nest.

laburnum : a kind of yellow flower.

18. *Swing* : Hindustan “*Jhoolna*.”

21. *flew in feathers* : was very light and bright, like a bird.

The fever on my brow : my mental weariness and pain.

'tis little joy : it is no comfort. More knowledge does not necessarily mean more happiness.

Note.—Thomas Hood had a sad life, as he was hardly ever free from poverty or enjoyed sound health for long.

5. CASABIANCA.

Mrs. Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793—1835) wrote several volumes of poems, *e.g.*, “*Lays of Many Lands*” and “*Songs of the Affections*,” but is perhaps chiefly remembered as the author of *Casabianca* (“*The Boy stood on the Burning Deck*”).

Casabianca died when he was only ten years old, yet his name will live for ever, thanks to this poem. His father, a French naval officer, was wounded in the Battle of the Nile (1798), soon after which his ship caught fire. Before the fire began, he had asked his son to remain on the deck till he told him to leave it. But the father was wounded soon after, became unconscious, and so could not give his son any further orders at all. Everybody else had fled the burning, doomed ship, and so heroic *Casabianca* perished with the ship.

1. *deck* : one of the floors of the ship.

2. *whence* : from where (from the burning ship).

3. *The flame* : the fire was lighting up the scene of the battle, and showed up heaps of dead bodies all around.

7. *of heroic blood* : of a noble family of heroes.
 8. *proud* : used in a good sense here.
 8. *form* : figure.
 9. *rolled on* : spread fast.
 10. *word* : order, permission.
 15. *chieftain* : commander of the ship (his father).
 19. *booming* : the loud sound of cannon-fire (as the battle was still going on).
 21. The hot wind touched and blew upon his forehead—
 (the fire had by now nearly reached him).
 22. *waving* : lifted by the wind.
 23. *lone post of death* : lonely position of mortal danger.
 24. *still* : calm, uncomplaining.
 25. *but* : only, no more than.
 26. *shroud* : a ship's rigging or ropes, etc.
 28. *wreathing fires* : curling, or circling flames.
 29. it was a majestic (impressive and awful) scene of fiery radiance or magnificence.
 30. *streamed* : flowed, rolled.
 32. *a burst of thunder sound* : a loud, thunderous explosion.
 36. *strewed* : littered : covered here and there in a hundred places (with wreckage).
 37. *helm* : the tiller or steering-wheel of a ship.
 37. *pennon* : a small narrow flag.
 38. *borne their part* : did their duty.

Questions.

1. How did Casabianca meet his death ?
2. Why was there no one to help him ?
3. What are the feelings this poem arouses in you ?
4. Describe the scene of the fire.
5. Do you know of any other such tragedy in which a young boy knowingly died for the sake of duty or obedience ?

6. THE CHILD'S FIRST GRIEF

5. *glancing bright*—glittering.
6. *sunbeam's track* : in the rays of the sun.
7. In my earlier days, I was very fond of chasing and

catching butterflies, but, now I am too sad, because of my brother's death, to chase butterflies any longer.

11. Our grape-creeper is loaded with bunches of grape.

17. A life beautiful and full like a rose, but short as a rose's life.

25. *brook* : streamlet.

in the glade : open space or clearing surrounded by trees.

7. THE BEST SCHOOL OF ALL

Sir Henry Newbolt (1862—1936) was the author of many patriotic poems, like “*Drake's Drums*,” “*Clifton Chapel*,” etc.

2. *The land of youth and dream* : the place (literally “country”) we used to live in when we were young and full of dreams.

3. *To greet* : to salute, to pay respect to.

3. *The rule we knew* : The School Code—or set of rules governing conduct while at the school.

4. *took the stream* : entered the crowd or flood of life.

7. *lost the old delight of her* : Being old, we can no longer quite recapture the thrills of schoolboy days.

8. *Keep her honour yet* : we are determined jealously to safeguard the name and reputation of the School ; *i.e.*, to behave well so that none may ever blame (or think badly of) the School to which we belonged, only because of our bad conduct.

12. *the last bell call* : Life is compared to a big school. Just as in a (residential) school, bells go on ringing at intervals all the day till the last bell at bedtime, so in the School of Life, the last bell means the call or approach of Death.

17. *the stars* : the brilliant things or attractions. Various honours or decorations, military and civil.

Sounding : loud, resounding, echoing.

Vanities : empty but showy things, outwardly attractive but of no real worth.

18. *half the crowd bewitch* : enchant most of the world : take magic possession of.

19. *inanities* : silly, empty, idle things, of no solid value.

20. *treads the pitch* : walks over the prepared and levelled ground between the wickets in a game of Cricket.

22. *roll* : go over the playground, like waves.

23. *Charges* : sudden vigorous attacks (here with the football).

thundering : with thunderous cheers of the schoolboys watching the game or match.

24. *twilight goal* : the Football goal dimly seen, for night has almost come.

25. *tanned the hide of us* : The schoolmasters who flogged us so hard as almost to take the skin off the caned parts of our bodies.

26. *daily foes and friends* : schoolboy pals and rivals, e.g. schoolboys of different "Houses" at a Public School.

27. *They shall not lose their pride of us* : we are determined that they shall ever remain proud of us, their pupils and school-fellows.

28. *Howe'er the journey ends* : We may lose or win the battle of life—may succeed gloriously or fail miserably in Life. But in either case we shall behave honourably and so as to bring a good name to our school.

30. *no more its message bears* : many of the poet's old school masters and even old school companions have by now died.

31. *the round world* : the whole big world.

shall ring of it : shall resound or sound gloriously with their message (through our deeds).

33. *a venture* : is something chancy and uncertain.

34. *here* : on earth.

34. *Can bide* (which) can stay permanently or remain for ever.

35. *the centuries* : the judgement of posterity (coming generations).

36. *dare* : face bravely.

36. *deepening tide* : it is easy enough to keep our feet firm in shallow water (or ebb tide), but the real test comes when the tide is full and the water, therefore, deep.

37. *the dust that's part of us* : our flesh, i.e., our human body.

38. *to dust again be gone* : may (after death) be again turned to, or mixed with, dust.

39. *here* : in our old school.

40. *The Schood we handed on* : our school is a kind of sacred trust, or precious inheritance, handed on carefully and lovingly from one generation of school children to the next.

Questions.

1. Which, in your opinion, is the best school in the world ?
2. What is the effect of your old school on you ?
3. What is the permanent value of school games and even of school "hidings" i.e., floggings ?

8. JOY AND PLEASURE

William Henry Davies (1871—1940) after a wandering life of poverty and adventure, became, he says, “a poet at 34 years of age.” His many volumes of poems are marked by simplicity and sincerity.

W. H. Davies has written “The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp,” giving his experiences of life. His poems are simple and fresh, and show a delicate childlike feeling for Nature.

2. *richer kind* : Pleasure is generally for the wealthy people—the richer human beings.

4. *confined* : even when imprisoned and not free.

5. *moth* : moths are small insects, sometimes seen circling round lamps or other bright lights.

glare : strong light.

15. *roams* : wanders from person to person.

19. *then* : at home and alone.

20. This shows that its mirth is all artificial and forced, not natural or real.

Questions.

1. Contrast Joy and Pleasure. Which of the two would you rather have ?

9. THE FLUTE-PLAYER OF BRINDABAN

Sarojini Naidu (1879—1949) died only last year as Governor of the United Provinces (or Uttar Pradesh as it is now called)—the first and only woman so far to hold such a position in India. She was as great a patriot as she was a poet. Who does not know this “Nightingale of India,”—poetess, patriot and sweet orator—who has made the name of India resound all over the world ? Her collected poetical works have been published by Kitabistan, Ltd. (Allahabad), under the title “The Sceptred Flute”. “*The Bird of Time*” and “*The Golden Threshold*” are the better known out of her three collections of poems.

Her books of poems "*The Golden Threshold*", "*The Bird of Time*," etc., are all full of melody, gorgeous jewelled phrases, and sensuous splendours and passions.

2. *Kadamba* :— a tree well known because of its association with Shri Krishna and his companions. Called in Latin *Nuclea orientalis*, it is a large tree with wide-spreading branches, fragrant, golden flowers, and round fruit.

13. *Indra* : the King of Gods, and master of Rain.

15. *Yama* : the ruler of Hell.

19. *Peril of the deep or height* : (1) ("*Narak*"). Danger of Ocean or of Mountain. (2) Dangers of the journey to Hell (below the Earth) or (*Patala*) the underworld, or of the journey to high Heaven (or *Swarga*).

1. *matchless* : unequalled.

2. *Neath* : for "beneath".

4. *Poignant* : sad, heart-touching.

9. *lures* : temptations, attractions.

10. *thrall* : slavery, bondage.

13. *groves* : clusters of trees.

15. *Silent courts* : courtyards peopled by the vast multitudes of the dead.

16. *engulfed* : sunk.

lampless woe : darkness and misery.

17. *subtle* : exquisite.

20. *daunt* : frighten, deter, keep back.

20. *winged* : swift and free as a bird.

21. *time-unconquered space* : Space which has not been conquered in the whole of Time (Eternity), or since the World began.

22. *Light-untravelled route* : path which even Light has never gone over.

Impede : hinder, check.

23. *pants* : gasps for breath : "*Hampna*".

drain : to drink to the last drop.

nectar : the drink of the gods "*Amrit*".

10. PEACE

George Herbert (1593—1633).—A younger contemporary of Shakespeare, he took to religion and became a priest. His best-

known work is "*The Temple*." He generally writes on religious subjects. Here he is talking of *inner* place—peace of the soul.

The younger brother of a Lord, he went to Cambridge University where he was public orator (1619—27) and later became a priest. "*The Temple*" (1633) is a collection of 160 religious poems, marked by rather quaint fanciful images. He was the first and greatest of the "*Metaphysical*" poets, who employed sometimes extravagant "conceits" and metaphors—(hidden comparisons.)

1. *crave* : beg, beseech.

3. *sought* : searched for.

7. *note* : marked, observed.

9. *the lace of Peace's coat* : a beautiful metaphor or image. The beautiful rainbow is taken by the poet as being the hem or border of the dress or *sari* of Peace (here regarded as a living person).

14. *gallant* : fine.

The Crown Imperial—or *Fritillaria Imperialis*, a fine flower.

17. *dugg'd* : old form of "dug".

18. *What show'd so well* : The flower which had had such a pleasing attractive appearance.

11. THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE

Not much is generally known about *Charles Wolfe* (1791—1823), who has written these splendid and famous lines. No other work of his is known to the public at large, but even this single stirring and spirited noble poem is enough to make his name deathless for all time in English Literature.

1—4. Usually military funerals are impressive, dignified things with military music, volleys of firing, etc. But in the case of Sir John Moore, the circumstances forced a very simple and hasty burial.

2. *funeral note* : appropriate, sad music.

5. *darkly* : in the dark : without sufficient lights, for fear of the enemy.

2. *ramparts* : defensive mounds, bearing guns, and protected by stone walls or parapets.

3. *discharged* : fired.
 6. *the sods* : pieces of turf or grass-covered earth.
 7. *struggling* : with the dark clouds.
 22. *upbraid* : find fault with—(for the mistakes supposed to have been made by the commander during the retreat to Corunna.)
 23. *reck* : care, regard.
 25. *but* : only, no more than.
 heavy—(a) difficult, and (b) sad, distressful.
 27. *random* : aimless ; chance.
 28. *sullenly* : in silent anger.
 30. *gory* : bloody.
 31. without any tombstone or epitaph (funeral inscription.)

Note

During the Peninsular War of 1809, Sir John Moore, an English commander, pursued by a brave French general, reached Corunna (a harbour in Spain) only to find that the English fleet he had been expecting there, had failed to reach that port. There followed a bloody battle, in which the gallant English general was killed, though the French pursuers were beaten off. Sir John Moore was then buried in haste on the *ramparts* near the sea, before the English army embarked on the ships which had reached by then.

Questions.

1. Explain lines 7, 16, 21, 22, 31.
2. Describe the feelings of the mourners.

12. LAUGH AND BE MERRY

John Masefield, born in 1878 and still alive, has been since 1930 the Poet Laureate of England. He is a reputed novelist and dramatist also in addition to being a celebrated poet. His novels like "*JIM DAVIS*," plays like "*NAN*," and poems like "*Reynard the Fox*" or "*The Everlasting Mercy*," are known to every well-read lover of English Literature. This little poem is both melodious and full of wisdom ; it preaches a sound philosophy of courage and cheerfulness, of "facing Life" gallantly. Masefield gives us an excellent motto for life—"Laugh, and Battle, and Work."

John Masefield ran away to sea early in his life—an experience which led later to his “*Salt-Water Ballads*” (1902), containing the well-known poem, “*I must go down to the seas again.*” He has written Essays, plays, novels, etc., also Ballads and narrative poems like the remarkable “*The Everlasting Mercy*”.

Life is an endless battle going on from one generation to another, all along the history of mankind. Let us laugh and be merry while fighting, for a sad heart tires soon while a merry one goes many a long mile, as Shakespeare says.

3. *span* : The largest diagonal distance of a man's hand from the tip of the little finger to the tip of the thumb (Urdu “*Balisht*”).

pageant of man : the eternal splendid procession of human generations down the ages of time.

6. God took pleasure in his making of the heaven and the earth, just as a poet rejoices when he has created a lovely poem or made a rare rhyme.

9. The Sky is compared to a Cup which holds the Wine of Joy.

10. *The Song of the great Stars sweeping by.*—Refers to the old doctrine of *the Harmony of the Spheres*, i.e., wonderful music made in concert by the heavenly bodies as they moved in space; but this melody cannot be heard by mortal ears.

Questions.

1. Why should we laugh and be Merry?
2. Explain lines 2, 10-11, 16 (first half).

13. HAPPINESS

2. *the whole day through* : all the day, throughout the day.

7. *cheery* : cheerful.

Questions.

1. What does true happiness consist in?

14. FAREWELL

1. *O eager faces* : the poetess addresses her listeners, i.e. the people of her country who are lovers of her poetry.

2. *the tender service* : the soft, loving work I can do for you, i.e., writing poetry.

2. *of my days* : so long as I am alive.

3. *spirits* : souls, people.

3. *bound* : physically in body, and also in heart, because of your affection and honour.

4. *the love-sprinkled garlands* : a simile or comparison. Just as water may be sprinkled on flower-garlands to keep them fresh and attractive-looking, so the people have praised the poetess—she feels, not only for outward show, but with sincere love.

5. *O Golden lamps of hope* : She addresses her hearers, especially the younger generation who are the future hopes of the country.

6. *Life's kindling flame* : To light up a lamp, one must apply to it either a lighted matchstick or fire from some other source. Here the poetess means—"How can I supply you Inspiration for Life from my own fading life?"

A forsaken fire : a fire which has been long left untended, and so is dying out. How can such a fire supply a burning coal to light other lamps with?

7. *Glowing* : bright, full of the joys and hopes, etc., of youth.

8. *a broken lyre* : no musician can play upon a broken instrument. Mrs. Naidu here feels that she has grown too old for song-making, that her heart and spirit are no longer so full of life and joy and aspiration and eager enthusiasm as she should wish herself to have as a poet wishing to inspire others.

Questions.

1. Whom is the poetess addressing in these lines?

2. What is the difficulty of the Poetess in singing "Life's glorious message"?

3. What do you understand by "golden lamps of hope," "life's kindling flame," "the tender service of my days," and "a forsaken fire"?

4. Write a short paragraph on "A Poet's Farewell to His Readers."

15. BREATHES THERE THE MAN

Sir Walter Scott (1771—1832). A Barrister, he wrote collections of historical, romantic, and other ballads : “ *The Lay of The Last Minstrel* ” (1805), “ *Marmion* ” (1808), etc. His verse romances were very popular, but later he became a best-seller Novelist (he is sometimes called “ the Father of the (Modern) Novel ”). “ *Waverley* ” (1814), “ *Ivanhoe* ” (1819), “ *Kenilworth* ” (1821). “ *Quentin Durward* ” (1823), “ *The Talisman* ” (1825), and “ *The Fair Maid of Perth*,” are some of the best-known of his scores of novels. He was a great and a good man, a noble man, and a thorough gentleman, himself a true patriot.

Sir Walter Scott is one of the best and most beloved of the world’s story-tellers, and is not unworthy of being compared in certain respects with the great Shakespeare himself. But he has given us some excellent, stirring, martial verse as well. This poem is one of the favourites of anthologists (makers of selections of poetry), but is of everlasting inspiration. How noble and moving it is in (a) depth of feeling and (b) eloquence of expression alike !

4. *hath ne’er within him burned* : has not started beating wildly as in the case of a man suffering from high fever.

6. *strand* : shore or country.

8. *no Minstrel raptures swell* : no bard (corresponding to Hindustani “ *Bhat*”) raises his song of ecstasy, (as heroes and patriots, like Maharana Pratap or Shivaji, are commemorated in song).

11. *pelf* : a word which was sometimes used in olden days (but always in an unfavourable sense) for “riches.”

12. *Concentred* : bound up.

13. *living, etc.* : while alive shall become deprived of fame, (shall become notorious).

14. *doubly dying* : dying both in body and in name.

Vile dust : low, mean, (undistinguished) earth.

Sprung : took birth.

16. FREEDOM

James Russell Lowell (1819—1891) succeeded Longfellow in

his Professorship at Harvard, and later was American Minister in Spain. He wrote prose and critical essays and several volumes of verse, including the satirical "*Biglow Papers*" (1848 and 1862).

Lowell was an American essayist, critic, and humorous poet. His "*Biglow Papers*" are very well known for their humour. He felt very strongly for the freedom of slaves—there was a lot of slavery in America during the first forty years or so of his life.

3. *a slave* : even a single slave.

6. *works* : causes.

9. *bear* : give birth to.

10. *New England* : i.e., American.

12. *roused* : angry, excited.

13. *lava* : the burning outflow from an active volcano.

19. *leathern* : dull and base ; hard and unfeeling.

28. *scoffing*. doubting the value of.

29. *shrink* : (metaphor) draw back.

32. *two or three* : only a very small minority, (with a large majority against their views).

Questions.

1. Compare this poem with Scott's "Breathes there the man with soul so dead."

17. HORATIUS

Thomas Babington, Lord *Macaulay* (1800—1859), was a great essayist and historian, and a member of the Supreme Council of India (1834—8), where he exerted great influence in favour of the official choice of an English, instead of an Oriental, type of education for India. His "*Lays of Ancient Rome*" (1842) included the famous *Horatius*—dealing with the very brave and noble defence by Horatius Coctes of the bridge leading to Rome against hordes of Tuscan attackers. His "*History of England*" was one of the most popular history-books ever written and sold.

1. *consul* : one of two chief magistrates of the ancient Roman republic.

3. *darkly* : gloomily—in sadness and doubt.

5. *their van will be upon us* : the front portion of the enemy army will have begun attacking us.

6. *goes down* : is hewed (cut) down by us, in an effort to save the town.

May win : do reach.

8. *what hope* : no hope.

The Captain of the gate : a Captain whose duty it was to guard the gate of the bridge.

14. *facing fearful odds* : trying to fight against unconquerable difficulties, *e.g.*, one man trying to fight a hundred enemies together.

15. *the ashes of his fathers* : the ancient Romans used to worship these (the remains of their forefathers).

17. *Hew down...all the speed ye may* : Get it cut down with the greatest speed possible.

20. *hold the foe in play* : keep the enemy engaged and so away from you.

21. *yon strait path* : yonder narrow passage—"the bridge-head," as it is called.

23. *on either hand* : one at my right hand and the other at my left.

26. *Ramnian* : the name of his tribe.

30. *Titian* : the name of Herminius's tribe.

31. *abide* : stay—remain.

35. *straight* : straightaway—at once.

35. *great array* : huge host.

forth went : ahead.

36. *dauntless three* : the fearless (indomitable) Horatius with Spurius Lartius and Herminius.

37. *in Rome's quarrel* : in any fight for their country.

38. *neither land nor gold* : freely sacrificed all their wealth and possessions.

41. *tightening* : buckling on—fastening.

42. *harness* : armour.

43. *foremost* : in the very front.

44. *to take in hand an axe* : to lend a hand with the hewing down of the bridge.

45. *Fathers* : aged patricians or noblemen.

Commons : the common, vulgar people.

46. *hatchet* : a light axe.

bar and crow : a crowbar (an iron bar with one end slightly flattened and bent, used as a lever).

47. *smote* : vigorously struck or attacked.

48. *loosed the props below* : tried to remove the supports from underneath the bridge.

50. *Right glorious to behold* : a splendid sight—a grand spectacle.

51. *Flashing back the noonday light* : as the Tuscan hosts advanced, their armour glittered in the sun, and reflected back its strong dazzling light.

52. *rank behind rank* : in unending rows or procession.

52. *surges* : swelling waves.

53. *Sea of gold* : why “gold?”. Because the sunlight is of a bright golden colour.

55. *peal* : loud sound.

55. *warlike glee* : martial joy :

56. *measured tread* : regular paces.

57. *ensigns spread* : battle-flags fully unfurled.

58. *rolled* : advanced, came like a sea wave.

63. *vanguard* : the front portion of the Tuscan army.

64. *spurring* : making their horses gallop fast.

65. *deep* : numerous, huge.

65. *array* : a mass of troops in order.

67-8. *flew to win* : rushed to gain by force.

72. *clove him . . . teeth* : cut through his head-plate (armour) and head till his sword reached the interior of the mouth of Seius.

74. *darted* : thrust with great force.

fiery thrust : fierce plunge or attack.

75. *the proud Umbrian's* : the proud Picus belonged to Umbria a province of Italy (or to the tribe called Umbri, after which that Province was named).

75. *gilded* : covered over with thin gold leaf or plated with gold.

76. *clashed* : fell down with a loud noise or clang.

79. *wild and wrathful clamour* : a furious, angry cry for revenge.

81. *six spears' length* : i.e., about 60 feet away.

85. *hark, the cry is “Astur”* : Listen, the dread, awful name of Astur is now passed round the Tuscan ranks.

86. *the ranks divide* : the soldiers turn aside, leaving in

between themselves a long narrow passage.

87. *Lord of Luna*, : Astur.

88. *stately stride* : majestic gait ; lordly manner of walking.

89. *ample* : broad, massive.

91. *brand* : sword.

92. *wield* : use, handle.

94. *serene* : calm, confident.

eyed : looked at.

95. *flinching* : shrinking ; hesitating or drawing back in fear.

97. *The she-wolf's litter* : the wolf-cubs or young ones of the she-wolf who, the legend goes, suckled Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome. So, here the meaning is : "the Romans."

98. *stand savagely at bay* : defend their city furiously—make a gallant last stand.

101. *whirling up* : moving up in a semi-circular movement.

105. *blade* : spear or sword.

106. *Right deftly* : very skilfully.

107. *came yet too nigh* : was not wholly avoided.

108. *helm* : his helmet, *i.e.*, head, at which the blow had been originally aimed.

108. *gashed* : made a deep cut in.

111. *reeled* : staggered, shook unsteadily.

116. *sped* : moved fast, made.

117-18. The sword passed right through the Lord of Luna (Asturs') head, and even projected outside some 8 or 10 inches.

Questions.

1. Explain lines 11-16, 35-40, 54-59, 85-92, 97-100, 107-10.
2. who was Horatius and what was the brave deed he performed ?
3. Who were "the dauntless three," and what deed of valour did they perform ?
4. What examples are there in this poem to illustrate that—
 "Romans in Rome's quarrel
 Spared neither land nor gold,
 Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
 In the brave days of old" ?
5. How and why was Horatius wounded ?
 How did he revenge himself ?

6. Who was Astur, Lord of Luna, and what was his fate ?

7. Which of the Poems of Patriotism in this book do you like most, and why ?

18. MOTHERLAND

3. *queenly treasure* : worldly wealth, like gems or gold.

6. *living wealth* : the gifts of a non-material kind, (not lifeless substance like gold or precious stones but for example **flowers**, the appearances of Nature, songs of **birds**, etc.).

7. *fragrance* : sweet smell, perfume.

her own : my motherland's—e.g., the *champa*, the *Ketaki*, the *moulshri*, etc. Such flowers are *peculiar to India*.

9. *flood my being* : overflow my whole self—make me feel and appreciate beauty both within and outside me.

revealed : opened—i.e., when I was a new-born babe, my eyes first opened and saw the light of Indian skies.

let the same light . . . closed for ever : May I, just before dying, be happy enough to see the Indian sky! (In other words, let me die only in India, not in a foreign country.)

Questions.

1. What is the main note or Central Idea of this poem ?

2. *Exactly* why does the poet love his motherland ? For its wealth, greatness, glory, power, size, history, or what ? (He loves it for none of these, but only because (1) it is *his own* motherland and (2) for its *beauty of nature*).

This short and simple poem is so beautiful and moving that it is well worth while committing it to memory.

19. THE TIGER

3. *immortal hand or eye* : God's divine artistry and vision.

4. *Fearful symmetry* : the tiger, though frightening to look at, has a perfectly proportioned graceful body.

5. *deeps* : ocean.

7. How did He fly so high to get the fire (burning fierceness ; fiery light) of the tiger's eyes from the distant skies (of line 5) ?

10. *twist the sinews* : curve and interlace the muscles.

12. *dread* : fearful, frightening.

13—16. God is compared, while making the first tiger, to a blacksmith grasping a strong hammer in his hand, and beating a piece of hot iron on the anvil into the desired shape.

14. *furnace* : blacksmith's forge (or Hindustani "*Bhatti*.")

17-18. The stars are compared to spearmen (fighters armed with spears).

Questions.

1. What is remarkable about the tiger ?

2. Who made the Tiger ? Was it an easy job to do ?

20. A GREEN CORNFIELD

Christina Rossetti (1830—94)—Her "*The Goblin Market and other Poems*" appeared in 1862. Her lyric named "*The Dream*" is notable. The greater part of her writings is of a spiritual and sad type. She has written religious poetry, verses for the young, and poems of fantasy or highly fanciful imagination.

4. *a Singing Speck* : The bird (skylark) was so very high up that she could hardly be discerned, but with the help of her singing voice, she could be made out as a tiny pin-point.

5. *a stage below* : at a much lower height.

5. *gay accord* : cheerful harmony or pleasant chorus.

7-8. (1) Mark the Alliteration (the abundant repetition of the initial "S" sound) here.

(2) There is an alternate rise and fall in sound, corresponding to the habitual rise and fall in the skylark's music, in "the singing skylark soared," "And silent sank," and "and soared to sing."

12. *Stalks* : long, thin, stems of the plants.

21. SUMMER

Kalidasa : one of the greatest dramatists and poets of the world who is said by some to have lived in the first century B.C.,

but others claim him as much more ancient a writer.

Kalidasa was the greatest Indian poet of ancient times, author of the famous drama "*Shakuntala*," of the epic "*Raghuvamsha*," of the famous poems "*Meghaduta*" and "*Ritu—Samhar*" (the Procession of the Seasons). From *Shakuntala* are taken these two graceful lyrics, (translated by Arthur W. Ryder,) who tells us, "rarely has a man walked the earth who observed living Nature as accurately as he."

3-4. *gently lowers the water* : gradually (imperceptibly) lessens or lowers the level of the water.

7. *Surcease* : ending.

8. *imperious* : commanding, compelling obedience.

12. *Sandal-water* : scented and cool water in which there has been mixed Sandalwood ("*Chandan*") paste.

15. *fret* : trouble - rub against.

18. *That on the altar wake* : This qualifies "*the fires*" in line 17, the flames on the (holy Hind. VEDI or) raised slab of stone or wooden platform for sacrifices.

20. *of peacock and snake* : There is traditional, hereditary enmity between these two creatures.

21. *ancient foe* : old enemy (the Snake).

22. *pluck* : courage.

hunger fail : the appetite generally lessens during summer.

27. *haze* : thin, vaporous mist.

31. *who find* : i.e., the snake.

32. *parasol* : a ladies' umbrella for protection against the hot rays of the sun.

37. *lakes . . . dot* : dotted by innumerable water-lilies.

38. *sprays* : in Hindustani "*Phuhor*."

Question

1. Paraphrase l. 9-24 (stanzas 2 & 3).

2. What does the poet wish for "the dear maiden" mentioned in the last stanza?

3. How far is this description true as compared to your own experience of an Indian summer?

22. THE RAINS

2. *awful* : frightening, terrible.

3. *thunders ring* : referring to peal on peal of loud thunder.

4. *royal drums* : drums heralding or signifying the approach of King.

5. *lighting-banners* : The flashes of lightning in the sky are compared to the fluttering flags in a battle.

5-6. *a Cloud* : Kings ride (in olden days) on elephants, and the rain-God on a cloud.

8. These particularly welcome and like the rainy season.

10. *drumlike thundering* : the loud sound of thunder is compared to the beating of noisy drums.

11. *arch* : semicircle.

12. *flashing* : bright.

11-12. In the olden days, archery was a national skill and game. To discharge an arrow from a bow, it was necessary for the string to be properly adjusted and stretched first.

Smite : strongly strike.

Them . . . apart . . . whom they love : separated lovers.

to the heart : in more senses than one (1) Fatally. (2) Deeply.

18. *nipa* : Sanskrit “Nipa” is the same as the *Kadamba*, for which please see the notes on “*The Flute Player of Brindaban*.”

20. *wind-swept, it* : the forest which is swept over by the wind.

21. *Ketak-blossom* : *Ketaki* (called “*Kevda*” in common speech) or *Pandarnus odoratissimus*.

sheath : unfolding outer cover.

23. *reviving* : after the killing summer, the breath (= cool breeze) of the rainy season revives the exhausted people almost killed by the preceding summer.

27. *prime* : the best part of one's life or youth.

28. *set on fire* : inflame ; kindle passion in her.

31. *unchanging* : constant, faithful.

Clinging vines : the grape-creepers which always require me support to cling to.

Questions.

1. Bring out in detail the poet's comparison of the RAIN with a King.
2. What are the changes that take place in the forest in the rainy season ?
3. Which of the two poems by Kalidasa (“SUMMER” and “The RAINS”) do you like most, and why ?

23. HOW BEAUTIFUL IS THE RAIN

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807—82) was an American poet, a Professor of modern Languages at Harvard, and widely travelled all over Western, Northern and Central Europe. Among his didactic poems (moral poems), there are to be mentioned the world-famous “*Psalm of Life*,” “*The Builders*,” “*Excelsior*,” etc. His “*The Village Blacksmith*,” “*The Wreck of the Hesperus*,” etc., are equally well known. He also wrote “*Hiawatha*,” a long poem about American Indians.

2. of the summer season.
3. *fiery* : burning hot.
6. *clatters* : falls with a loud sound.
7. *tramp of hoofs* : sound of horses' hoofs.
9. *Spout* : projection at the mouth, directing the flow of water.
14. *gutter* : roadside drain (*nali* or *nala*).

24. TO DAFFODILS

Robert Herrick (1591—1633) was a priest and a devoted admirer of Ben Jonson. His chief work is “*The Hesperides* ;” a collection of some 1200 poems. Besides many short religious poems, he has written a number of excellent songs or poems of *lyrical* (singing) quality.

2. Daffodils fade away very fast.
4. it is not even noon yet.
6. *hasting* : running fast away. .
8. *evensong* : the name of the evening prayer in Christian churches.
12. *as short a spring* : (comparatively speaking) a human being's youth and best period of life is almost as short as a short-lived blossom's prime.
19. *the pearls* : the bright, shining (pearly) dewdrops.

25. THE LEAP OF ROUSHAN BEG

1. *fleet* : swift.
2. *Chestnut steed* : horse of reddish-brown colour.

3. *bandit chief* : head of a band of robbers.
9. *the dust-cloud in his course* : the little cloud caused by the swiftly galloping horse's hooves. These eddies and sprays of dust went on following the horse as it progressed.
15. *Garden-girt* : enclosed or surrounded by a garden.
16. *Khan* : an Oriental inn with a large inner courtyard where whole caravans put up.
20. *men at arms* : armed warriors.
20. *his livery wore* : were his uniformed retainers (soldiers).
21. *did his bidding* : obeyed his commands ; carried out his orders.
22. *regions* : vast stretches ; large areas or territories.
26. *sheer* : perpendicular, very steep.
- the precipice* : the perpendicular face of rock.
27. *the torrent roars unseen* : the invisible violent rushing stream makes a loud and deep sound.
29. *Yawns* : gapes wide.
- Chasm* : the ravine (Hindustani—*khud*)
30. *ravine* : abyss.
36. *La Illah illa Allah* ! glory be to God.
41. *spray* : thin tiny flowering branch.
46. *housings* : horse's cloth coverings as protection against the weather, or used for ornament.
47. *skein* : a small hank of silk or thread. Pronounced "Skane."
57. *verge* : extreme edge ; brink (of the precipice).
60. *surge* : swelling high wave.
64. *Rattling* : falling in quick, sharp, loud succession.
67. *tasselled cap of red* : a Fez Cap has tassels (Knots of thin cords *Hind.* : "*Phuudna* ") hanging from it.
70. *Neither hand nor bridle shook* : Showing the extreme steadiness of the rider.
72. *glare* : flash.
73. *sheath* : scabbard, case.
74. *Phantom* : supernatural, seen as if in a vision.
78. *Cataract* : a great waterfall (or, a series of waterfalls).
81. *Allahu* : Praise be to Allah !
- N.B.*—*Koordistan* : a rugged mountainous tract covering parts of Persia and of Turkey.
- Erzerum and Trebizond* : towns in Turkey.
- Orfah* : (Urfah) a town in Turkey.

Questions.

1. Explain the following :—
garden-girt ; on the verge ; tasselled cap of red ; the phantom horseman.
2. Make a list of the comparisons made in this poem between two things or ideas. (Such comparisons, introduced by “*like*” or “*as*,” are called *Similes*). E. g. “soft thy skin as silken skein ;” “sang to him . . . as upon . . . sings a bird before it flies.”

26. THE PERFECT LIFE

Ben Jonson (1572—1617) lived in the same days as Shakespeare, and, in their own days, was regarded by many as superior to the latter. He has written many plays of which “*Every Man in His Humour*,” “*Every Man Out of His Humour*,” etc., are the best known. His main volume of poems is “*Underwoods*” (1640). He was thought of so highly that he is often, in old writings, referred to as “O rare Ben Jonson.”

2. *In bulk* : in enormous physical size.
4. *bald* : having no hair (in the case of a man) ; without branches and leafless (in the case of a tree-trunk).
4. *sere* : dry.
5. *a lily of a day* : this flower does not last beyond a single day.
9. *small proportions* : tiny, but exquisitely symmetrical objects.
9. *just beauties* : exact grace or shapeliness resulting from perfect proportion.
10. *short measures* : a short-lived human being.

Questions :—

1. Can Life be perfect in small proportions and short measures ?

27. THE PLATE OF GOLD.

James Henry LEIGH HUNT (1784—1859) excelled in writing the light kind of miscellaneous essay and also wrote some good *ism*, e. g., of Shelley and Keats. “*Rimini*” (1816) is his

best-known poem. Poetry was, so to say, the work of his left hand.

Leigh Hunt is best known as an Essayist, but has written some well-known poems, many of them on Eastern themes. His poems generally convey a moral lesson, such as of pity, sympathy, or justice. His "*Jaffar*" & "*Abou ben Adhem*," have long been favourites of compilers of Poetry selections, but his chief poem is "*The Story of Rimini*."

6. *adjudge* : decide.

6. *deem* : think, guess, suppose.

10. *every quarter* : North, South, East, West, etc.

20. *parted* : distributed.

23. *basest* : most inferior.

aghast : appalled : dismayed.

24. *hapless* : luckless, unfortunate.

clanging : clattering.

25. *guerdon* : rich gift.

transformed : magically changed—completely changed.

28. *maimed* : the blind, the lame, and others with missing or broken limbs.

29-30. *move that love* : to excite or evoke the pity and charity of the claimants.

31. *well for them it was* : They did reap a rich harvest of money—

32. *if gold be charity* : alms.

N.B. distinguish between *alms* (something material—e.g., money, food, etc.,—given to a beggar) and *charity* (which is *love* of the heart for the needy and unfortunate, whether it is accompanied by solid gifts or not). Thus, giving gold need not necessarily mean true heart's charity on the part of the giver, who may give merely out of show or in order to win fame, etc.

41-42. *To pay a vow* : to fulfil a vow previously made.

Shrivelled : lean and thin ; haggard and shrunken.

47. *shunned* : avoided and disliked.

sore creatures : suffering from sores, perhaps leprosy sores.

Sightless : blind.

maimed : useless, palsied or rotten away (eaten away by leprosy.)

53. *wrangled* : contested, disputed for supremacy.

57. *beckon* : to motion, to make a gesture, of calling somebody near oneself.

60. *lustre* : brightness.

65. *streamed* : flooded, overflowed.

Question.

1. What is the moral of the Poem ?

(Answer.—True Charity or love is of the *Heart*, not of the *Purse*.)

2. Why did the Plate of Gold turn so often into base lead, and again from leaden to gold ?

3. Why did it not turn leaden when offered to the peasant ?

28. THERE'S A GOOD TIME COMING

4. *glisten in the ray* : shine brightly in the light.

7. *stronger i.e.*, than cannon-balls.

Supersede : replace, substitute.

12. *the pen . . . the sword* : then, disputes will no longer be settled by force, and writers will then be regarded as far higher than soldiers or generals.

13. *might* : power, brute force.

13. *lord* : ruler.

15. *worth* : merit.

birth : the accident of being born in a high family, *e.g.*, now-a-days a king's son becomes the king after his father, not because of his own personal merits.

16. *acknowledged* : generally admitted.

17. *proper impulse* : the right direction.

22. *monster of iniquity* : an ugly, unnatural, wicked creature or thing.

26. *slaughter . . . sake* : Kill, to gain fame.

34 *impulse* : tendency.

29. TRY AGAIN

Eliza Cook (1818—89) is one of the minor poetesses. The most popular of her collected poems (published 1870) was "*The*

"Old Arm Chair" which had appeared in 1837.

1. *flung* : threw.
3. *monarch* : a great King.
4. *sink* : to despair.
10. *grieved* : sad.
11. *pondered* : thought deeply and sadly—brooded.
14. *clue* : thread wound into a ball : properly spelt "*clew*."
17. *dome* : arched or vaulted roof (*gumbaj* or *gumbad*).
as e.g., on the top of the Taj Mahal.
18. *a rope so fine* : a thread so very thin and weak.
20. *divine* : guess.
21. *cling* : hold fast.
22. *endeavour* : effort.
23. *sprawl* : untidy fall : it fell not neatly, but "all in a heap."
26. *utter* : make or express.
28. *dizzy* : giddy, very weak.
31. *tread* : Walk on.
32. *would tire* : grow deeply weary.
swung : moved, fell.
38. *strive* : try hard.
39. *toils* : labours, works.
40. *tumbles* : falls.
42. *anxious minute* : a minute full of anxiety.
43. *cobweb door* : the door of his cobweb.
44. *win it* : gain his home.
47. *pinch* : spurt, critical point.
48. *cot* : bed.
49. *Bravo ' Bravo '* : "*Wah Wah* " or (*shabash*).
51. *defied* : did not yield to, or challenged.
52. *Conquered* : was victorious.
53. *braced* : tightened, made firm.
54. *Gossips tell the tale* : Rumour, or Legend says.

Questions.

1. How did King Bruce of Scotland regain his lost heart courage ?
2. What is the lesson this poem teaches us ?

30. NOW

A. A. Procter (1825—64) wrote “*Legends and Lyrics*” (1858—61) including “*A Lost Chord*.”

The Poetess compares life to a battle, and success in life to victory in battle.

1. *passing* : going away fast.
2. *dreaming on* : inactive.
3. *buckled* : tied on, fastened.
4. *forth to the fight* : out to the battlefield.
5. *ranks* : among the common soldiers as they are fighting.
7. *nothing* : unimportant.
8. *stern* : pitiless, firm, severe.
11. *airy* : imaginary.
11. *storming* : gaining by sudden fierce attack.
18. *sunshine and storms* : days of happiness and of pain : prosperity and adversity.
20. *vain* : useless, futile, unavailing.
21. *she* : the Past (here personified).
22. *phantom* : ghostly. The Past, being “dead,” is here regarded as a ghost.
24. *strife* : struggle.
30. *or* : otherwise.
- the hour will strike* : the clock may chime or ring the hour.

Question.

What does this poem teach us ?

Answer.

The poem teaches us that we must be active and not waste time in vain regret or useless fears or even idle hopes. Because Time is like a bird on the wing, and, once lost, can never be captured again.

In the famous “*A Psalm of Life*”, Longfellow has put the same idea in the fine lines :—

“ Trust no Future, howe’er pleasant !
 Let the dead Past bury its dead !
 Act,—Act in the living Present,
 Heart within, and God o’erhead ! ”

also—

“ Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate ;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour, and to wait.”

31. A NATION'S STRENGTH

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803—1882).

American philosopher, essayist and poet. He was a profound (deep) thinker and a lover of nature. His “ *Representative Men* ” and “ *The Conduct of Life*,” etc., are works of wisdom better known than his “ *POEMS*.”

1. *a nation's pillars* : a nation is compared to a building. The higher the pillars, generally the grander and more impressive the building.

2 *foundations* : continuing the same metaphor (hidden comparison). Basis of strength.

3. *mighty to defy* : strong or powerful enough to challenge.

4. *round it throng* : crowd (gather in large numbers) around it—encircle or surround it.

5. *gold* : wealth.

5. *Its* : of Gold.

6. *battle shock* : in the strong collision of battle.

7. *shafts* : “shaft” is a particular portion of a pillar or “column”.

sinking : loose, shifting, not firm or steady.

8. *abiding* : durable, permanent, long-lasting.

8. *not on . . . rock* : The firm, lasting rock is contrasted with the loose, unsteady sand.

9. *the sword* : military power—brute force—physical strength

9. *the red* : bloodstained, bloody.

10. *passed away* : vanished, belonging to the past.

11. *their stones to rust* : the colour of their stones has become rusty (brownish-red).

13. *that bright crown*—i.e., Pride.

bright : shining, glittering. . .

14. *sweet* : desirable, pleasant.

15. *lustre* : the brightness (of “ That Crown ” of Pride).

16. *ashes* : dust.

18. *A people* : a nation.

20. *stand fast* : endure or resist firmly and for a long time.

22. *dare* : have the courage to fight on against "fearful odds."

fly : run away in fear.

23. *deep* : firmly—on deep foundations.

24. *lift . . . sky* : raise them to loftiest heights (of glory and greatness).

Questions.

1. In what does a nation's true greatness consist ?
2. Is India strong, judged by the test laid down in the poem of a nation's strength ?
3. What are some of the things in which a nation's strength does not really lie, but is often falsely supposed to consist ?
4. How will you try to make your country strong ?
5. Memorise the whole of this noble poem.

